

**Guidelines to Support Student Wellness through:  
1) Limiting Competitive Foods in Schools, 2) Healthier Fundraising, and  
3) Healthy Role Modeling by Adults in School Settings**

**This is a set of sample guidelines and procedures for schools to use to strengthen existing school wellness policies in the areas of competitive foods, fundraising and role modeling by adults.**

**Background**

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mandated school wellness policies (Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, 2004) for all schools receiving federal funds for school nutrition programs, all students from all schools can benefit from an effective, strong school wellness policy;

Whereas the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, 2010, will establish nutrition standards for all foods and beverages served in schools;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity (1, 2);

Whereas, nearly the entire United States population (all ages) consume a diet that does not meet the recommendations from the USDA MyPyramid (3); whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive; the role of sound nutrition and physical activity in academic achievement has been well documented; and good health improves student attendance, education, and behavior (4-9);

Whereas, nationally, the items commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, snack bars and a la carte lines are predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit beverages, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes (10);

Whereas, nearly 40 percent of total energy (calories) consumed by 2-18 year olds was in the form of empty calories (added sugars and fat) (11);

Whereas, selling low-nutrient foods in schools contradicts nutrition education and sends children the message that good nutrition is not important. School environments should reinforce classroom nutrition education by modeling and supporting healthy behaviors (10);

Whereas, the adults within the school environment are role models providing daily exposure to students. The daily routines of staff members are a significant influence on student behavior and actions;

And, whereas, the school environment provides an opportunity to present consistent messages that healthful eating and a physically active lifestyle are best for children's health now and throughout adulthood.

## **Competitive Foods in School SAMPLE PROCEDURES**

*Thus, the \_\_\_\_\_ School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by creating a healthy food zone throughout the school by making nutrient-rich choices readily available and limiting competitive foods. Therefore, the following procedures (an addendum to the existing school wellness policy) will be followed.*

### **Nutrition standards for all foods and beverages served in school**

1. As established by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, 2010, all foods and beverages offered or sold in schools throughout the school day, including reimbursable meals and competitive foods, will meet nutrition standards consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. Competitive foods are foods and beverages sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria à la carte and snack lines, fundraisers, school stores, classroom celebrations, etc.
2. Ideally, the schools will select a set of nutrition standards that mimic the standards used by the USDA School Meals Program.
3. Nutrition standards will be applied throughout the school day, immediately before school, after school, and during school-based events or activities.

### **Limiting access to competitive foods**

Limit competitive foods sold during mealtime within the cafeteria by prohibiting food and beverage sales (including fundraising) during mealtimes that are in direct conflict with the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.

### **Suggested procedures for handling competitive foods**

#### **Vending machines**

1. Contents of all vending machines, operational during the school day and located anywhere on the school campus, will meet the nutrition standards as set forth above.
2. Vending machines located inside the cafeteria or in food service areas will not be in competition with the school food service/National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.
3. Vending machines will offer foods and beverages consistent with the nutrition standards of the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.
4. The above mentioned nutrition standards may or may not apply to school sponsored events taking place in the evening hours where student's consumption can be monitored by parents; such as concessions, athletic events, dances or performances. However, it is advised that the foods and beverages meet the nutrition standards as set forth above thereby making nutrient-rich choices readily available and sending a consistent message to the community that healthy eating is important.

#### **Fundraising**

1. Fundraising activities which occur during school hours will not take place during breakfast or lunch.
2. The school (or school district), the parent association, student clubs and student activity groups will implement school fundraising activities in which the majority offer healthy food choices or non-food sales such as:

- Fundraisers which sell food items recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, lean protein foods and whole grains;
  - Fundraisers that sell non-food items;
  - Farm-to-School fundraisers which connect locally grown/produced products to the school community/families; and
  - Fundraising activities that promote physical activity.
3. The school (or school district) will provide a list of healthy fundraising options to school administrators, school organizations, parent groups and other members of the school community who hold fundraisers.

### **Snacks**

1. Snacks served during the school day will meet the nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages.
2. The school will encourage serving fruits, vegetables and/or whole grains as the primary snacks and water and/or unflavored skim or 1% milk as the primary beverage.
3. The school district will make available a list of ideas for healthful snack items to share with teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

### **Rewards**

1. The school district will avoid the use of foods or beverages for rewards. Using food as a reward encourages kids to eat and drink, even when they are not hungry and may create an unhealthy relationship with food that lasts a lifetime.
2. Additionally, the school district will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as punishment.

### **Celebrations**

1. The school district will limit celebrations that involve foods and beverages during the day to no more than one class party per month.
2. Each party should include only foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for competitive foods.
3. The school district will disseminate a list of healthy food and non-food items for use in school celebrations for teachers and parents.
4. Schools may elect to make an exception for cupcakes/treats for elementary student's birthdays. When serving treats, attention should be paid to a reasonable, child-size portion. Other considerations include:
  - Celebrating birthdays on one day each month of the school year; thereby limiting the number of days that birthday treats are provided; and
  - Asking parents to coordinate the birthday celebration day with treats, nutrient-rich foods and beverages and/or non-food items provided.

## Healthy Role Modeling Practices by Adults in School Settings

*Thus, the \_\_\_\_\_ School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy lifestyle role modeling by adults. Therefore, the following procedures (an addendum to the existing school wellness policy) will be followed.*

### A. Nutrition

**School staff are encouraged to role model healthy food and beverage choices at school including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.**

1. School staff are invited to eat meals in the cafeteria with their class to support a pleasant mealtime environment while serving as visible healthy role models.
2. School staff are encouraged to be supportive of the school meals programs as studies show that students who consume school lunches consume twice as many servings of vegetables at lunch and have higher intakes of protein, vitamin A, vitamin B-12, riboflavin, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc as compared to non-participants (14).
3. School staff who choose not to consume a school-prepared meal are encouraged to role model a balanced lunch which includes fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains. Healthy beverage choices are recommended such as low fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk, water or a small serving (8 oz.) of 100% juice.
4. If school staff choose to consume sweetened beverages (such as carbonated soft drinks or energy drinks) or low nutrient dense foods (such as fast food or other foods of minimal nutritional value), these foods/beverages will be consumed out of sight of the students not in the classroom, cafeteria or on the playground.

### **Action steps for healthy role modeling by classroom teachers**

1. Use non-food items for rewards.
2. Plan classroom parties with good nutrition in mind. Serve foods/beverages which include healthy options such as low-fat dairy, fruits, vegetables or whole grains.
3. Incorporate nutrition messages into the existing curriculums.
4. Encourage positive body image, self-esteem and body size diversity. Refrain from talking about personal dieting plans or body weight in front of students.
5. School staff to teach academics (math and language arts) through physical activity by leading short 10-minute activity/brain breaks or energizers in the classroom as a routine part of every school day.

### B. Physical Activity

1. School staff will not link physical activity with punishment such as taking away recess

time or physical education classes, or assigning additional exercise as punishment.

2. School staff are encouraged to reward students with physical activity opportunities such as extra recess time or a daily walk around the school neighborhood, thus allowing students to get more of the physical activity their bodies need and enjoy, and helping to eliminate the unhealthy habit of rewarding children with food.
3. School staff are encouraged to promote and support positive body image and acceptance of all body shapes and sizes.
4. School staff are encouraged to be active with the students when they are able: during class or at recess, and through other avenues which promote physical activity such as Walk to School events, Jump Rope for Heart, Big Sky Fit Kids, school field days, mileage clubs, Fitness Finders, active recess, etc.
5. Classroom teachers make classroom energizers a routine part of every school day.

## References

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[http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/us\\_obesity\\_combo.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/us_obesity_combo.pdf)
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- <sup>4</sup> Taras, H. Nutrition and Student Performance at School. *Journal of School Health*, (2005) 75: 199–213. doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2005.00025.x
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- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2010. The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/pdf/pa-pe\\_paper.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf)
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- <sup>11</sup> Reedy J, Krebs Smith S. Dietary Sources of Energy, Solid Fats, and Added Sugars among Children and Adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. (2010) 110:1477-1484.
- <sup>12</sup> Mayo Clinic, definition of Energy Density, retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/weight-loss/NU00195>
- <sup>13</sup> Nutrient Rich Foods Coalition, definition of nutrient rich foods, retrieved from [www.nutrientrichfoods.org](http://www.nutrientrichfoods.org)
- <sup>14</sup> Clark MA, Fox MK. Nutritional quality of the diets of U.S. public school children and the role of the school meal programs. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. (2009) 109 (suppl 1):S44–S56.

## **Appendix A**

### **Definitions**

#### **Competitive Foods**

Foods sold in competition to the National School Lunch Meals during the school day such as: foods sold in the à la carte program in school cafeterias, in food and beverage vending machines, student stores, and snack bars. Also through fundraising activities, classroom parties and celebrations, and school-sponsored events.

#### **Energy Density: Volume versus Calories**

All foods have a specific number of calories within a given amount (volume). Foods that are high in energy density have a small volume for the large number of calories in them. For example, foods such as desserts, candy or often times fast food sandwiches are high in energy density. Alternatively, foods that are low in energy density have large volume for the calories they provide. For example, most vegetables and fruits are considered low in energy density (12).

#### **Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value**

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) are foods that provide less than 5 percent of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) for each of eight specified nutrients per serving or 100 calories. The specified nutrients include protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, niacin, riboflavin, thiamin, calcium and iron. The four categories of FMNV are soda water/carbonated beverages, water ices, chewing gum and certain candies. The USDA regulations prohibit the sale of FMNV during student meal services in the food service area (any area on school site premises where National School Lunch and Breakfast program meals are either served or eaten).

#### **Nutrient-Rich**

Nutrient-rich is a consumer-friendly way to say “nutrient dense.” The definition: A food (or beverage) that has substantial amounts of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients yet has relatively few calories. The USDA’s MyPyramid shows a variety of nutrient-rich foods and/or beverages in all five food groups at the foundation of the pyramid.

Examples are colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat or fat-free milk products, legumes, lentils, lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts. Nutrient-rich can be used to describe more than individual foods. The term can apply to an entire way of eating. It defines an approach with energy balance, featuring mostly nutrient-rich foods and fewer foods with less nutrient density (13).

#### **Nutrient Poor**

Foods with low nutrient density supply calories but relatively few vitamins, minerals, protein or fiber. Examples of nutrient poor foods or beverages include potato or snack chips, candy,

#### **Healthy Fundraisers**

Johanson J, Wootan M. “*Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can Be Healthy and Profitable.*” Washington, DC: Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2007.

<http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/schoolfundraising.pdf>

An example of a Montana Farm-to-School fundraiser:

[http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/#p7GPc1\\_4](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/#p7GPc1_4)

A one-page fact sheet with healthy fundraising ideas:

<http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/fundraiserfactsheet.pdf>

Smart Fundraising for Healthy Schools

[http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs\\_main/initiatives/documents/FundraisingAlternatives.pdf](http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs_main/initiatives/documents/FundraisingAlternatives.pdf)

**Healthy School Snacks** Healthy School Snacks

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/resources/TN/HealthySchoolSnacks.pdf>

## **Rewards**

Smart Rewards for Successful Kids

[http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs\\_main/initiatives/documents/ClassroomRewards.pdf](http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs_main/initiatives/documents/ClassroomRewards.pdf)

## **Celebrations**

Celebrating at School with Health in Mind

[http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs\\_main/initiatives/documents/SchoolCelebrations.pdf](http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs_main/initiatives/documents/SchoolCelebrations.pdf)

Create Healthy, Active Celebrations

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthy lifestyle/quickandeasy/celebrations.pdf>

**Physical Activity during the School Day** Mind and Body Resource for Grades K-5

<http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/data/pdf/TeacherPDFs/MindBody.pdf>

Brain Breaks <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/brainbreaks/>

Contact Montana Action for Healthy Kids for Recess in Action resources

[http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club\\_id=1154&pg=main](http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club_id=1154&pg=main)

Fitness Finders <http://www.fitnessfinders.net/>

**General Resources** Action for Healthy Kids

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/>

Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program

<http://www.montanana.org/index.html>

Montana Office of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Programs and Montana Team Nutrition

[http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/index.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/index.html)

[http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/MTTeam.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/MTTeam.html)

School Wellness Policy information and resources:

[http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/HealthTopics/index.html#gpm1\\_5](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/HealthTopics/index.html#gpm1_5)

- Montana School Wellness in Action: A Step-by-Step Guide to School Wellness



## Policy Implementation

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/schoolfood/wellness/WellnessInActionGuide.pdf>

- Nutrition Education age-appropriate and accurate nutrition education resources and lesson plans:  
[http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/index.html#p7GPc1\\_10](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/index.html#p7GPc1_10)
- Farm-to-School resources:  
[http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/index.html#gpm1\\_4](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/index.html#gpm1_4)
- USDA Team Nutrition  
<http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/>